

----- Original Message -----

Subject: letter from Branford Inland Wetlands Commission
Resent-From: Islandereast.Comments@noaa.gov
Date: Thu, 20 Nov 2003 17:32:08 -0500
From: Danny <danny@smdsensors.com>
To: IslanderEast.comments@noaa.gov
CC: Diana Ross <dross@branford-ct.gov>

Please find our comments attached in a word document and also pasted below.

Regards,
Danny Shapiro
Chairman Branford Inland Wetlands Commission

Inland Wetlands Commission
TOWN HALL
BRANFORD CONNECTICUT 06405

November 20, 2003

For the attention of NOAA, re Islander East Natural Gas Line Proposal

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing today on behalf of the Branford Inland Wetland Commission, a local body which has jurisdiction to govern land use near wetlands in our Branford. The proposal made by Islander East does not fall under our review but we can see no reason why any activity proposed for our Town would not be made to meet our local standards. Our Commission has worked long and hard to preserve the quality of our wetlands and it seems unimaginable that anyone permitted by a Federal body to perform work in our Town should not meet the same standards that the inhabitants of our Town are subject to.

There are many areas in which the Islander East proposal falls short. First and most importantly they do not meet the "feasible and prudent alternative" test that the entire State of Connecticut is subject to. Our State law mandates that all proposals for work in and around inland wetlands cannot go forward without a demonstrating that there is no prudent and feasible alternative. On a macro scale the obvious prudent and feasible alternative is an available "spigot" already placed in the Sound off the coast of Milford. The placement of this spigot and further attachment of pipe to it is in sand and avoids work in shell and finfish beds and other natural resources located near to shore both in Branford and Milford. On a micro scale the prudent and feasible alternative test is not met where specific pipe placement and plans for work around wetlands is planned. Work in the wetlands near the Tilcon "marshalling yard" is unnecessarily destructive to a highly valued vernal pool and wetland area. There is an obvious alternative across the track that avoids this destructive proposal. Further to the south a pocket of brackish water on the east side of the track is not avoided. Work in the "upland review area", and the wetland itself is avoidable.

Islander East has not been made to proffer a proposal which will minimize impacts in this area. The above mentioned cases are offered as an example of the non-conformities that Islander East is clearly guilty of and is in no way an exhaustive list.

Mitigation where work in a wetland is "proven" to be unavoidable has not been offered by Islander East. The Branford Inland Wetland Commission has specific standards that work in wetlands should be compensated for by creation or enhancement of other wetlands. This compensation comes with standards for planting and monitoring the efficacy of the created wetland and obviously this precedent has also been ignored by Islander East.

Islander East's proposal falls short in the details of sedimentation and erosion control. Here in Connecticut there is a standard for such work that is described by our Department of Environmental Protection. Islander East's proposals for specific sedimentation and erosion controls falls well short of this standard as well as the local standard that all residents of Branford are subject to.

In short, we cannot imagine why a Federal or other body would propose work that doesn't meet local or State standards. We find it inconceivable that this project that demonstrates less than mediocre standards should be foisted upon a community that works hard to maintain high standards.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel E. Shapiro
Chairman



Submitted on behalf of the Branford Inland Wetlands Commission noaa-01.doc